

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 6, 12 and 15 have been amended to indicate the weighting coefficient represents the distance between at least one loudspeaker and at least one microphone. Similar changes have been made in dependent claims 4, 7-9, 11, 13, 16-18, 20 and 23. Previously, the weighting coefficient was referred to as representing the coupling between at least one loudspeaker and at least one microphone. Because the examiner apparently has not given proper consideration to the word "coupling" the claims have been amended to change "coupling" to "distance." Changing "coupling" to "distance" does not introduce new issues or require a new search because the paragraph bridging pages 10 and 11 of the substitute specification defines "coupling" between a microphone of a communication device obtaining a signal and the loudspeaker of another communication device as the distance separating the microphone and the speaker.

The independent claims have also been amended to indicate the dedicated coupling is a connection distinct from the telecommunication network. A similar change has been made in dependent claim 20. This limitation, apparent from connections 30 and telecommunication network 20, Figure 1, is inherent from the "dedicated coupling" language previously employed in the claims. Obviously, the telecommunication network does not provide dedicated coupling between at least two local communication devices. Consequently, this amendment does not require a new search or consideration of new issues.

Based on the foregoing, entry of the amendment is in order.

These features are not disclosed nor suggested by Finn et al., US Patent 6,496,581, relied on in the previous office action to anticipate claims 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22 under 35 USC 102(a), or by Boland, US Patent Publication, 2003/0123674, relied on in combination with Finn et al. to reject claims 1-5, 8, 12-14 and 17 under 35 USC 103(a).

Finn et al uses "model 120" and "model 122," respectively trained to converge to and model the paths from loudspeaker 34 to microphone 36 by auxiliary noise from source 132 and by auxiliary noise from source 136. (col. 7, l. 18-20; l. 25-27). There is no suggestion to weight the processed signal, based on the distance between the loudspeaker and the microphone. The notion of "distance" is clearly not considered by Finn et al..

Boland also does not suggest either of these features. Boland discloses a single terminal, wherein echoes between a microphone and loudspeaker are sought to be cancelled. Consequentially, Boland does not consider the problems of coupling between plural terminals that are close to each other.

One of ordinary skill in the art would not have combined Finn et al. and Boland to arrive at the devices of claims 1 and/or 6 or the methods of claims 12 and/or 15 because Boland does not concern plural terminals. The references do not disclose nor suggest the invention as defined in claims 1, 6, 12 or 15.

The dependent claims are allowable for the same reasons advanced for the claims upon which they depend.

Early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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